



## H.Res. 194 – Apologizing for the enslavement and racial segregation of African-Americans

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### FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 194 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Steve Cohen (D-TN) on February 27, 2007. It was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, but was never considered.

H.Res. 194 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 29, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

H.Res. 194 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Acknowledges the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery and Jim Crow;
- Apologizes to African-Americans on behalf of the people of the United States, for the wrongs committed against them and their ancestors who suffered under slavery and Jim Crow; and
- Expresses its commitment to rectify the lingering consequences of the misdeeds committed against African-Americans under slavery and Jim Crow and to stop the occurrence of human rights violations in the future.

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### BACKGROUND

Between 1619 and 1865 millions of persons of African descent were enslaved in the thirteen American colonies, and later in the United States. These individuals were forced to work primarily in the agricultural industries of Southern states, but were also fairly common in Northern states where they performed other varied tasks. Slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865 with the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Jim Crow laws refer to a legal system enacted in Southern and Border States between about 1876 and 1965. These laws mandated segregation in various public facilities, imposing a supposedly "separate but equal" status for blacks and other non-white racial groups. This system led to inferior treatment and accommodations. Some examples of Jim Crow laws are the segregation of public schools, and public transportation, as well as the segregation of restrooms and restaurants for whites and blacks. The majority of Jim Crow laws were overturned by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

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### STAFF CONTACT

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